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Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development

Statement submitted by Droit à l'energie SOS futur, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2006/100.

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Statement

Although energy is not specifically mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals, all agree that at least six of the Goals cannot be reached without access to energy, a crucial factor for development and growth. No energy means no water for drinking or sanitation, and difficulties in terms of access to education, health and food safety.

In developing, emerging or industrialized countries, universal access to energy or increased energy intensity helps to improve economic activity and therefore employment.

Employment is affected in several ways:

- The arrival of energy in a geographical area contributes to reducing migratory flows and encouraging local development, thereby avoiding depopulation of rural areas and the creation of suburban areas in which unemployment becomes endemic. The impact is dual: reduced pressure on large urban areas, while settling people in natural employment areas.
- The development of economic activity caused by the arrival of energy in a region initially generates employment in small businesses or local crafts. This very often releases women and children from the tasks of seeking firewood and water supplies. More time is then available for economic activity or education in the case of children. And education means future employment.
- Employment created in the energy production sector itself, particularly the electricity sector, contributes to the technological development of the countries and regions concerned through the technical expertise and know-how required for these sectors. If the arrival of energy is accompanied by intelligent transfer of technology and appropriate training by the companies and countries with understanding of the technologies in question, this will create local expertise in the field.
- Finally, the development of public-private partnerships, which we propose, with endorsement of companies in exchange for ethical undertakings, is a win-win situation for employment: this creates activity and qualified employment in developing countries, while also allowing companies in industrialised countries to benefit from a growth relay enabling them to develop employment in their country of origin.

With its network of 220 member structures in 70 countries, our organisation proposes to make universal access to energy an essential requirement and has drafted an Action Plan for universal access to energy, with three main focuses: the Millennium Development Goals, including universal access to energy, public-private partnerships, and the involvement of civil society at all stages of development.

In concrete terms, one example is our Nigerian association's support for the Kandadji dam in Niger which, if it goes ahead, will provide an independent electricity supply for the country, economic development, which is currently held back by the inability to meet basic requirements, and an end to food shortages through the implementation of an irrigation programme.